

HERBERT HOOVER NATIONAL HISTORIC SITE, IOWA

JULY 26, 1965.—Ordered to be printed

Mr. BIBLE, from the Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
submitted the following

REPORT

[To accompany H.R. 8111]

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs, to whom was referred the bill (H.R. 8111) to establish the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site in the State of Iowa, having considered the same, report favorably thereon without amendment and recommend that the bill do pass.

PURPOSE

The purpose of H.R. 8111, is to provide for the creation of the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site and for its administration by the Secretary of the Interior as a unit of the national park system. A similar measure S. 810 was introduced in the Senate by Senator Miller, for himself and Senator Hickenlooper. Hearings were conducted on both bills.

NEED

Herbert Clark Hoover, 31st President of the United States, was born August 10, 1874, in a two-room cottage on the site in West Branch, Iowa. He spent the first years of his life there and his and Mrs. Hoover's graves are on the site. The cottage in which he was born is still standing. It has been fully restored and houses family pieces and other furniture of the period. A replica of his father's blacksmith shop is also on the site, as is the modern Herbert Hoover Library in which are kept his Presidential papers and a number of other memorabilia from his long career as an engineer, translator (with Mrs. Hoover) of Agricola's "De Re Metallica," relief administrator, in Belgium, Secretary of Commerce, and elder statesman.

The proposal under the bill is to set aside approximately 200 acres of land in order to preserve, as far as possible, the setting of the Hoover cottage, blacksmith shop, library, and graves. Twenty-eight of these acres are already owned by the United States and

administered by the General Services Administration. The Hoover Birthplace Foundation owns another 6½ acres and has acquired scenic easements on 15 more.

The plan for development of the site so that it can be fully appreciated by the visiting public includes the building of a small visitor center, provision of adequate parking space, rerouting of a city street in order to eliminate vehicular traffic immediately in front of the cottage, and refurbishing certain older houses in the area as needed to preserve the atmosphere of the site. The library will continue to be administered by the General Services Administration, but provision is made in the bill for a cooperative agreement between the Administration and the Secretary of the Interior for transfer to the latter of land not needed for use in connection with the library and for use by the General Services Administration, in accordance with terms to be agreed upon, of facilities constructed by the Secretary.

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs is unanimous in its belief that the creation of the Herbert Hoover National Historic Site is a worthy proposal, that the historic site will be a worthwhile addition to the national park system, and that the Nation will be honoring itself in showing its continued respect for a great American.

COST

Section 4 of the bill as amended limits the amount authorized to be appropriated for land acquisition and development costs to \$1,650,000 of which it is expected that no more than \$1 million will be needed for land acquisition and not more than \$650,000 for development expenses. Annual operating costs will approximate \$95,000 a year, given present prices and salary scales.

DEPARTMENTAL REPORTS

The report of the Department of the Interior, dated June 8, 1965, and the report of the General Services Administration, dated June 10, 1965, follow:

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR,
OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY,
Washington, D.C., June 8, 1965.

HON. WAYNE N. ASPINALL,
Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
House of Representatives,
Washington, D.C.

DEAR MR. ASPINALL: This responds to your request for a report on H.R. 4252, a bill authorizing the establishment of the Herbert Hoover National Monument in the State of Iowa, and on H.R. 8111, a similar bill.

We recommend the enactment of H.R. 8111 or H.R. 4252 if amended as suggested in this report.

H.R. 4252 provides that the Secretary of the Interior shall acquire by gift, purchase, condemnation, or otherwise all right, title, and interest in the lands he deems necessary to establish a national monument commemorating the birthplace and burial place of the late President Herbert Hoover. The lands would be designated as the Herbert Hoover National Monument and would be administered by the Secretary in accordance with the act of August 25, 1916 (39

Stat. 535; 16 U.S.C. 1 et seq.) as amended, and the act of August 21, 1935 (49 Stat. 666; 16 U.S.C. 461 et seq.). The Secretary is authorized to construct within the national monument markers, buildings, other improvements, and such facilities for the care and accommodation of visitors as he deems necessary.

H.R. 8111 authorizes the Secretary of the Interior to acquire land or interests in land in or near West Branch, Iowa, for a Herbert Hoover Birthplace National Historic Site.

The combination of birthplace, boyhood home, and burial place of the 31st President of the United States constitutes historical resources of unquestionable national significance. The presence in the same area of the Herbert Hoover Library, containing not only the late President's papers but also objects illustrating his long and distinguished life, further enhances this significance. It is evident that these sites and objects illustrating our Nation's history should be preserved and made accessible to the people in a spacious and dignified setting. The Advisory Board on National Parks, Historic Sites, Buildings, and Monuments has found this site to be of "exceptional value in illustrating the history of the United States and in commemorating the life of Herbert Hoover and his accomplishments" and recommended that it be established as a national historic site.

Herbert Hoover, world-renowned engineer, humanitarian, and 31st President of the United States, was born August 10, 1874, in a simple two-room cottage in the town of West Branch, Iowa. The cottage was originally built about 1870 by Herbert Hoover's father, Jesse Clark Hoover. It has been completely restored and refurnished, and stands on the original site not far from the west branch of Wapsinonoc Creek from which the town drew its name. Nearby is a well-executed replica of Jesse Clark Hoover's blacksmith shop, which houses an extensive collection of contemporary tools and other objects. A caretaker's cottage and a workshop stand behind these structures.

About one-fourth mile to the southwest on a hillside overlooking his birthplace are the graves of Herbert Hoover and his wife, Lou Henry Hoover. The graves are sheltered by a crescent-shaped planting of evergreens and the view down the valley to the birthplace is kept open in accordance with the wishes of President Hoover.

Just south and west of the birthplace stands the Herbert Hoover Library. This recently enlarged structure will house the collection of papers accumulated by Mr. Hoover during his many years of public service, his collection of books, and a variety of other objects. The library and its contents will remain under the custody and control of the Administrator of General Services. However, we believe it will be possible to work out mutually satisfactory agreements with the Administrator whereby the Secretary could make use of portions of the library from time to time and the Administrator could in turn utilize portions of the facilities constructed by the Secretary.

Approximately 200 acres of lands or interests therein should be acquired so that the area may be developed for the education and enjoyment of the public, and will provide a dignified setting for the birthplace, burial place, and related features of the historic scene free from modern vehicular traffic and other encroachments. Nearly 28 acres of the Hoover Birthplace Park now administered by the Administrator of General Services, except the Herbert Hoover Library, could be transferred to the administrative jurisdiction of the Secretary of

the Interior if the bill is amended as we recommend. Also to be included in the proposed area are 6.7 acres owned by the Herbert Hoover Birthplace Foundation, Inc., and 15 acres on which the foundation has acquired a scenic easement. There is a possibility that the foundation will donate these lands and interests in lands to the United States. In addition, a small amount of property owned by the town of West Branch will be included in the proposed area due to the necessity of vacating and relocating streets and alleys, some of which are adjacent to the birthplace cottage. We believe the town will agree to donate this property to the United States. The remainder of the needed land is privately owned.

We recommend the following amendments of H.R. 4252:

1. On page 1, amend the title of the bill by changing "Herbert Hoover National Monument" to "Herbert Hoover Birthplace National Historic Site" and make the same amendment on page 2, line 3 of the bill; on page 2, lines 6 and 15, delete "monument" and substitute therefor "historic site".

With a few exceptions, the Congress has consistently designated areas which derive their national significance from historical associations as national historic sites. Also, the birthplace is the key historic structure in the area and we believe this should be recognized in the name given to the site.

2. On page 1, revised section 1 to read: "That the Secretary of the Interior may acquire on behalf of the United States by gift, purchase, or otherwise such lands and interests in lands, together with any improvements thereon, as the Secretary may deem necessary for the purpose of establishing a national historic site commemorating the birthplace and burial place of Herbert Hoover, the 31st President of the United States, on the site located in Cedar County in the State of Iowa. The Administrator of General Services may transfer to the Secretary without reimbursement any lands or interests in lands under his jurisdiction, except the Herbert Hoover Library building, that are needed for the purposes of this Act."

The amendment permits the Secretary to acquire less than the fee title to lands, such as scenic easements, in cases where it is adequate to do so. The General Services Administration now has administrative jurisdiction over the lands on which the birthplace and other key properties are located, and we believe these lands, with the exception of the library building, should be transferred to the jurisdiction of the Secretary. The amendment authorizes such a transfer.

3. On page 2, lines 4 and 5, delete "National Park Service, under the direction of the Secretary of the Interior," and substitute therefor "Secretary of the Interior".

The Hoover Commission reports recommended, and the subsequent reorganization plans generally placed in the head of each department complete responsibility for administration of the programs of the department. In keeping with that approach, the bill should confer authority on the Secretary of the Interior rather than on a bureau of the Department.

It is estimated that the lands involved will cost about \$1 million and that the developments will cost about \$650,000. Annual operating costs should approximate \$95,000 by the fifth year.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that there is no objection to the presentation of this report from the standpoint of the administration's program.

Sincerely yours,

JOHN A. CARVER, Jr.,
Under Secretary of the Interior.

GENERAL SERVICES ADMINISTRATION,
Washington, D.C., June 10, 1965.

HON. WAYNE N. ASPINALL,
*Chairman, Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs,
House of Representatives, Washington, D.C.*

DEAR MR. CHAIRMAN: Your letter of May 13, 1965, requested the views of the General Services Administration on H.R. 8111, 89th Congress, a bill to establish the Herbert Hoover Birthplace National Historic Site in the State of Iowa.

The purpose of the bill is to authorize the Secretary of the Interior to acquire real property necessary to establish and maintain a historic site associated with the life of Herbert Hoover in or near West Branch, Iowa. The bill would also authorize the Secretary and the Administrator of General Services to enter into agreements for the transfer of land now administered by GSA, except the Herbert Hoover Library building, and for the use by either the Secretary or the Administrator of portions of property under the administration of the other.

The birthplace and burial place of Herbert Hoover is now the property of the United States, and is being maintained by GSA as the site of the Herbert Hoover Library pursuant to section 507 of the Federal Property and Administrative Services Act of 1949, as amended (44 U.S.C. 397).

We have no objection to the Secretary of the Interior being authorized to acquire more land at the site, if appropriate, and administering the whole with the exception of that required for the library itself and an adjacent parcel which GSA wishes to reserve for future development of the library facility.

GSA, therefore, is not opposed to the enactment of this measure.

The effect of the enactment of H.R. 8111 on the budgetary requirements of GSA has not been estimated.

The Bureau of the Budget has advised that from the standpoint of the administration's program there is no objection to the submission of this report to your committee.

Sincerely yours,

LAWSON B. KNOTT, Jr.,
Administrator.

COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee on Interior and Insular Affairs recommend enactment of H.R. 8111, as amended.

It has been a long time since the subject has been treated in a popular manner, and the present volume is the result of the author's efforts to fill this gap.

The author has endeavored to present a complete and accurate history of the state, from its first settlement to the present time.

The work is divided into two parts, the first of which contains a general history of the state, and the second a more detailed account of its various counties.

The author has endeavored to make the work as interesting and readable as possible, and to give it as much value as he could.

It is hoped that the work will be found useful and interesting to all who read it.

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